



Conflict and Cooperation in Large-Scale Infrastructure Projects: Lessons from the Port of New York City

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Central Questions:

- How are issues of jurisdiction and scale dealt with in regard to infrastructure?
- How was multi-level governance of infrastructure developed in New York?

Key Findings

- Clearly defined boundaries (institutional, jurisdictional, administrative) are required
- Consensus on infrastructural 'goals' is required
- Requires buy-in from local policy makers to function appropriately

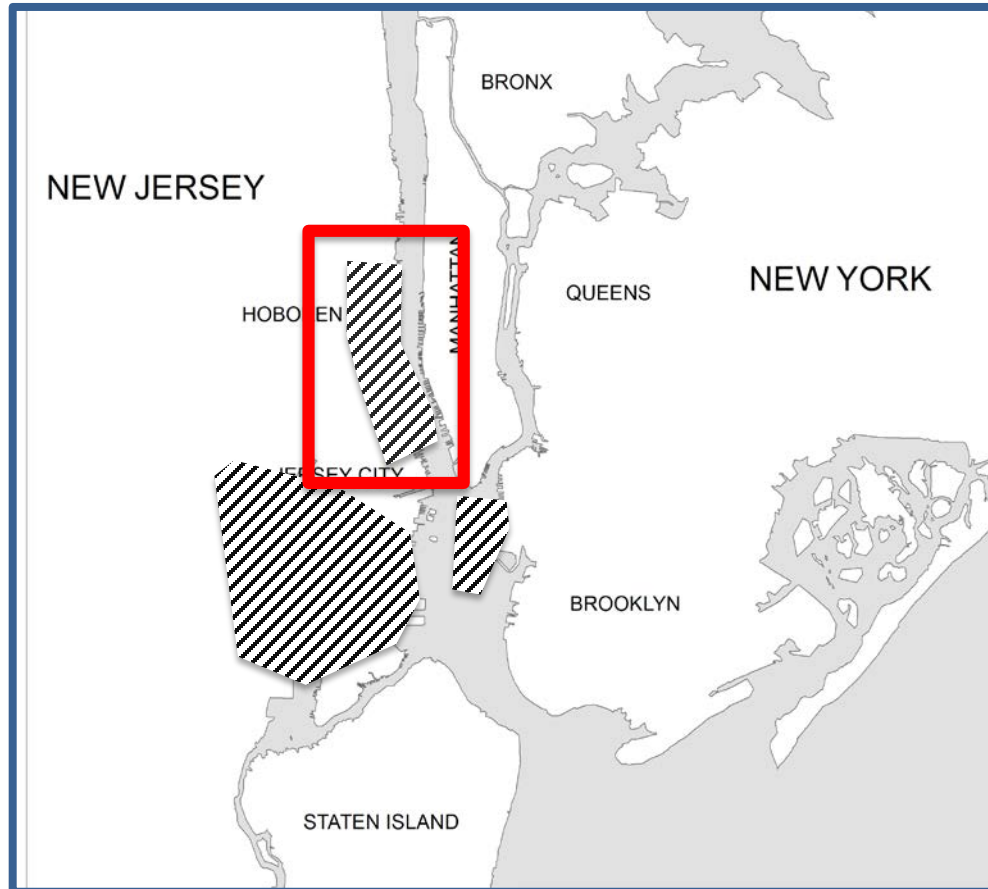
Outline

- 1911 Organization and Crisis
- 1917 War and Logistics Crisis
- The Birth of the Port Authority
- Lessons from the Port Authority

Port Governance, 1911

- Overlapping, messy, and contentious
- Spatial, jurisdictional, and institutional divergence
- Private-sector convergence and consensus

Port of New York, 1911



Agencies and Governments	Issue	Level
Department of Docks	Planning, Construction, Operation	Municipal
New York City, Hoboken, Jersey City	Planning, Construction, Operation, Regulation, Finance	Municipal
Pilot Commission	Operation	State
New Jersey Riparian Commission	Regulation	State
New York, New Jersey	Funding, Regulation	State
New York Harbor Line Commission (Army Corps)	Planning, Construction, Regulation	Federal
Department of Commerce	Regulation	Federal

Port Jurisdictions, 1911



Points of Institutional Divergence

- Manhattan's officials see ships as central to image and economic growth
- New Jersey officials eager to develop their own piers
- State officials worried about up- and down-stream erosion
- Federal engineers show preference for 'greenfield' development

The 1911 Pierhead Crisis

PLAN NEW FIGHT FOR EXTENDING THE PIERS

Dock Commissioner Hopes Secretary of War Will Grant Permit After To-morrow's Hearing.

HARBOR'S FUTURE AT STAKE

New Haven Railroad Official to Urge Claims of New London Before the Steamship Companies.



Background – Pierhead Lines

- Limit in the Hudson River beyond which no piers can be built to maintain navigation
- Set by the New York Harbor Line Board's Engineers
- Constant point of disagreement between municipal and federal officials (1890, 1908, 1911)

Background – Chelsea Piers

- Flagship infrastructure project for New York Department of Docks
- Magnet for transatlantic steamship service
- Completed in 1910 at 800 feet long – too short for Olympic and Titanic



Conflict over Pierhead Extensions

- Pro Extension: New York State, New York City, Steamship and Railway Firms, Pilots Association, Chambers of Commerce
- Against Extension: Army Corps of Engineers (NYHLB), New Jersey Riparian Commission
- Firms and Department of Docks get hearing for extensions only with the intercession of the Secretary of War

Process for Extending Piers

- Two separate month-long hearings, first denied over safety and navigation fears
- JP Morgan, New York's Mayor, Governor, etc. make several trips to White House
- Secretary of War over-rules New York Harbor Line Board, approves temporary extensions



The Crisis as Catalyst

- Recognition of the governance structure as a threat to the port (and the region's) prosperity and development
- Sparks cooperation between New Jersey and New York municipal officials

“What they say about the commerce of the port of New York we say. Their interests are ours. We are a part of the port of New York. New York City is not the Port of New York. The whole Jersey shore is just as much a part of the port of New York as New York City...”

Towards Unified Governance

- 1910 – Merchant’s Association: an interstate commission needs to make “a permanent and comprehensive plan adequate to the needs of commerce...”
- 1911 – Governor of New York appoints commission of State Engineer, Department of Docks Commissioner, and Member of Chamber of Commerce – New Jersey appoints a similar group

“The day of individual railroad and steamship terminal development has passed, and the cities and states about the harbor must use their power of control and their credit to organize the entire port for the railroads, the steamships, the canal and the river traffic, and for industrial use.”

Federal Opposition and Inertia

- Joint commission limited to advising New York Harbor Line Board on pierhead lines
- Army Corps of Engineers unwilling to give up control over navigable water
- Cooperation between New York and New Jersey bodies limited by interstate commerce powers of Federal Government – would require a federal law to make this possible

Breaking Inertia: World War I

- 1917 – Hoboken is the major port of embarkation for troops and material bound for Europe
- Centralized control of all movement of trains and ships in and out of harbour by the Army Transportation Department
- Relies on existing infrastructure – centred on Manhattan

Infrastructural Inadequacy

- Combination of storms and poor circulation between New York and New Jersey lead to huge congestion
- Trains backed up as far as Pennsylvania
- “the failure of the responsible authorities in the past to look beyond Manhattan.”

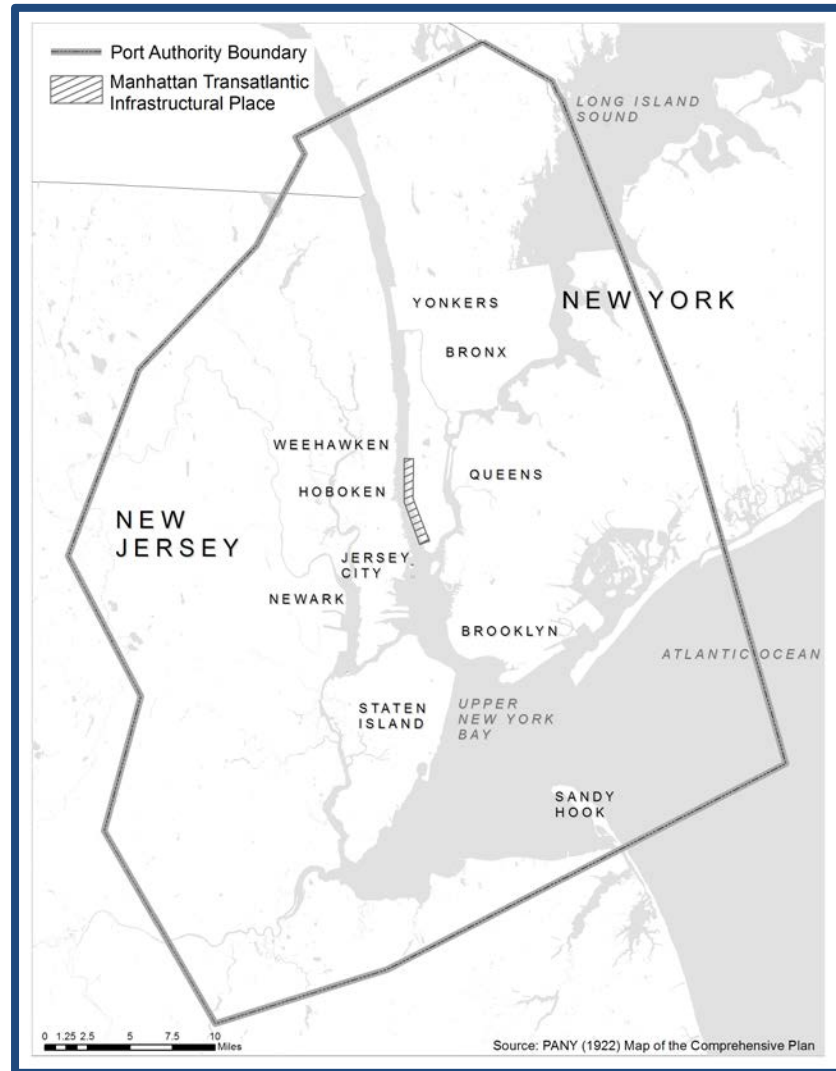
Post-War Unification of Governance

- Galvanized support within all levels of government for unified planning of Port of New York as a whole
- New York City officials and private-sector players drive the creation of commissions in both states to study the issue
- Require Congress to declare a Port Authority with the powers of planning “under a sacred trust – for the benefit of the nation as a whole.”

The Creation of the Port Authority

- New York, New Jersey, Washington, DC create the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
- 3 Officials from New York, 3 from New Jersey, and Federal advisors
- Power to plan, operate, build, and regulate a huge area

The Port Authority Boundary



The Port Authority Today

- Operates 5 marine terminals, 5 airports, 4 bridges, 4 line commuter rail network, 2 tunnels, 3 bus terminals, 4 industrial parks, 2 ferry terminals, 2 redevelopment districts, 1 major office building
- Expanded and altered mission along with demands of transportation market and infrastructure technology

Conclusions

Foundations for Regional Governance

- Driven by local actors – private and public sector
- Strong sense of regional ties and effects
- Shared development goals
- Crisis!

Barriers to Institutional Change

- Requires multi-level legal changes
- Officials hesitant to let go of power
- Where do boundaries go?
- Requires other forms of consensus building to exist beforehand

Further Questions

- How can these institutions be made more responsive and democratic?
- Can service-provision infrastructure operate within the same institutions?

Thank you!

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